

## **PART XIV**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

Miami-Dade County is a vibrant and exciting community. Many of our residents understand the need for taking care of their health and were provided with the tools to begin their lifestyle change. Activities in the community that continue and will be used to measure the improved health status include:

- Blood pressure screenings
- BMI and percent body fat screenings
- Nutrition education
- Exercise classes at community sites
- Pedometer challenges

The data gathered will provide information to the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade and community health centers with information needed to implement added initiatives to make our community healthier.

Promoting healthy living through the worksite is growing. It is therefore recommended that plans are set forth to develop and implement an Employee Wellness Program for Miami-Dade County and the Miami-Dade County Health Department. It is also recommended that the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade encourages and assists the local private sector to develop and implement employee wellness programs.

Presently, the Health Council of South Florida in partnership with the Miami-Dade County Health Department and Florida International University School of Public Health are beginning a Worksite Wellness Project that will review existing models and in the future provide employers with a low cost resource for establishing their own employee wellness programs.

Perhaps one of the most exciting events in the future will be the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Conference in October 2006. This will bring in health expert from the United States and Latin America to discuss how to make communities healthier by sharing best practices and research materials. This event will be hosted by the University of Miami and planned with the support and assistance of the Miami-Dade County Health Department. There is also a plan to work with PAHO toward becoming a healthy municipality through our community-wide wellness efforts.

In the future, Miami-Dade County will be one of the healthiest communities in the United States. The commitment and dedication of the many people who worked together toward making the Mayor's Health and Fitness Challenge" a success will make our desire to have a healthier community become a reality.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SIMILAR FUTURE PROGRAMS**

- There are 2,253,362 people residing in the greater Dade County Community of which 57.3% are reportedly Hispanic or Latino, 20.7% reportedly Caucasian (non-Hispanic), 19.0% African-American and/or Black, and 1.4% Asian and other. The report showed that 932 adults completed registration forms during the main events of July through December. This indicates a greater need to reach out to more people in the greater Miami community and get more people involved.

- According to the Census Bureau 52% of the Greater Miami Dade Community is male and 48% is female yet male respondents averaged 34%. This is clearly lower than their true representation in the community. Certainly more could be done to attract more male participants in such events.
- Perhaps the awarding of more gifts, prizes, souvenirs, and mini-competitions to enhance more male involvement would be beneficial. The recruitment of athletes to speak at such events that could serve as role models for so many members of this community would also be advantageous to enhance male participation.
- It would be important to have a system to evaluate the total number of participants at these events not just those that complete the registration forms. Thus we could determine the total number of participants versus the number who completed questionnaires.
- Since 27% of the respondents indicated they wanted to be in the Focus Group, a tracking system should be in place to provide a follow-up for those showing a strong interest and repeated participation in such events.
- It would be important to have a “period of training” for all staff members working for the Challenge. This would improve the consistency in collecting the data ensuring uniform procedures are provided for all participants and improving the continuity among different events. There was a large variability in response rate to various questions. With uniform training procedures, there would be consistent emphasis placed on eliciting a high response rate to all questions.
- To encourage government entities and the private sector to develop and implement employee wellness programs in order to take advantage of the new the new Florida Bill HP 1629, the Affordable Health Care for Floridians Act. Such programs will benefit the employer by making them eligible to purchase a more affordable medical insurance coverage for their employees and at the same time promote a health and safety conscious work force.
- One of the more notable findings was the large number of participants agreeing to adopt a healthy lifestyle. In the December group, 100% of respondents agreed to adopt a healthy lifestyle and showed a high level of motivation. With such a captive audience, more Health and Fitness Assessments should be provided. It would not be difficult to provide a general fitness assessment, a central obesity assessment, which is more strongly associated with cardiovascular disease risk than body mass index, a percent body fat assessment, a stress assessment and a global fitness evaluation. This may be of interest to many people. Universities such as Florida International University, University of Miami, Barry University all have programs that could provide these assessments with a student constituency that is trained to evaluate them. A greater integration with the university system could provide a more comprehensive evaluation available for participants at such events. The Challenge indicated a community that is more than receptive to these types of evaluations that provide a great deal of individual information relevant to one’s health.
- Since the servings of fruits and vegetables consumed daily was reportedly below recommended levels, it is recommended that future events include a Computerized Nutritional Analysis System that could be coded and completed at the event itself. Participants likely would be interested in a computerized printout of their Calorie and Nutrient consumption based upon a one-day Food Log. It would not only serve to

engage participants but also to educate them and involve them in the analysis of the foods they eat.

- Perhaps more souvenirs such as T-shirts or pedometers could be given to those completing certain activities at each event. In some of the more sophisticated events, a point scoring system is used for each activity completed and those with the greatest number of points at the end had received upscale gifts from local sponsors. A simplified reward system to motivate participants to complete more activities and come to more events should be in place.
- Finally, the Challenge should now become more specific to try to achieve certain goals designed to elicit positive health behaviors. To this end why not solicit a “Mayors Weight Loss Challenge” or a “Physical Activity Challenge” or the “Ultimate Nutrition Challenge” to the Greater Miami Dade Community? The Challenge may be to lose ten (10) pounds by the end of the summer (Weight Loss Challenge) or to walk a minimum of 10,000 steps per day using your pedometer (Physical Activity Challenge) or to cut 250 Calories off your daily Calorie intake or reduce fat intake by 5% (Ultimate Nutrition Challenge). In this way, one could specifically target and challenge participants to improve a certain aspect of their lifestyle. It appears that this community is ripe for such a Challenge!

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Thus the information reported reflected a very viable community and captive audience intrinsically motivated to improve their health and fitness. A large percentage of responses, do show that the participants exercise regularly and do not smoke or drink alcohol at all.

There are some concerns that the respondents in all locations were either overweight or obese, require some nutritional counseling incorporating more fruits and vegetables into their daily diet and spend a large amount of time, up to three (3) hours daily, in sedentary activities (TV or computers) which is positively associated with obesity. The substantial amount of stress and the fact that a small percentage of respondents have no personal physician is also cause for concern.

Most importantly, feedback from the Mayor’s Challenge indicates a direction to initiate more community involvement with our parks and recreation departments, more sponsored events targeting fitness activities, reducing the amount of sedentary behaviors, promoting healthy nutritional choices and understanding the importance of including relaxation in our daily routines.



In Partnership with:

**Health Foundation**  
*of South Florida*

Presented by:



**¿QUIERES ADQUIRIR UNA BUENA SALUD  
PERO NO SABES CÓMO HACERLO?**

**Acepta el Reto y...**

***¡Ponte en forma! ¡Aliméntate bien! ¡Relájate!***

Si quieres estar en buenas condiciones físicas, alimentarte correctamente y controlar el estrés, únete a este programa mensual GRATUITO de un año de duración que ha sido diseñado para ayudarte a ti y a



tu familia a volverse personas con buena salud.

**Es divertido, gratis y ¡depende de ti!**



**PARA INFORMACIÓN SOBRE LOS EVENTOS MENSUALES, llama al  
305-375-3333 o visita el [www.mayorschallenge.net](http://www.mayorschallenge.net)**



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